



Info@starklawlibrary.org

Stark County Law Library Association

July 2003

BEGINNERS

Using Database Filters

The email address, info@starklawlibrary.org really works! TRY IT!!

In last month's column I instructed you to make specific comparisons to get to the information needed for a deposition. This month I will be explaining what we were doing and why.

The website [geekgirl.talks](http://www.geekgirl.talks.com/databasics_05.htm) has a great tutorial at: <http://www.geekgirl.talks.com/databasics_05.htm>. The introduction to Chapter Five defines our topic for this month:

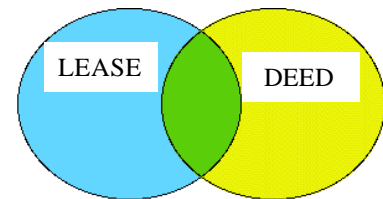
The whole point of using a database is to turn *data* into *information*. Data are facts which have no inherent meaning; information is data put into context to convey meaning.¹

If you would like to use the tutorial stop at "Using QBE." That section focuses on more advanced database software such as Access, Filemaker Pro and Lotus Approach. I will be going over much of the same material, just in a more lawyer-friendly manner.

QBE stands for *query by example* and

refers to a method of forming queries in which the database program displays a blank record with a space for each field. You can then enter conditions for each field that you want to be included in the query. QBE systems are considered easier to learn than formal query languages.²

In Microsoft Works' database program, the first choice you will encounter after giving the filter a \name, is using "and" or "or." We first discussed and/or scenarios in conjunction with web searching using Boolean logic/operators.



You should use AND to get information just on leases and deeds. OR will get you everything about both. You **must** be very careful when determining which to use - most filtering mistakes are made here. If you get a message that none of your records match the criteria, rethink your use of AND/OR first.

The next column is a list of "Field names." Be sure to note the scroll bar on the right, if your database has more than three fields, and it no doubt will, the remaining fields will not be immediately visible. The "Comparison" and "Compare To" columns are simple and no discussion is necessary.

The proper use of filters can turn facts into useful information!

Using Database Filters (Continued)

The proper use of filters can turn facts into useful information! If you haven't already made a Case Chronology, open your database software and create these fields (all general, except "date"): Issue, Entity, Fact, Date, Source, Disputed Status, Linked Issues, Court Acceptable, Favorable/Unfavorable. Now fill in some data from an active case.

We are going to answer five questions using our database, first I will state them in regular speech form:

1. How many of our facts are unfavorable to our case?
2. Is there an entity that is not a person?
3. Are the facts that occurred on January 28, 2003 in dispute?
4. Which facts in our case still need a source?
5. How many of our facts are linked to issues other than the primary issue?

Try using filter comparisons to answer these questions. If you need help, the following are the same questions, but written in query language.

1. Show me the records where the "Favorable/Unfavorable" field "is equal to" "Unfavorable"
2. Show me the records where "Entity" "is not equal to" "Person"
3. Show me the records where "Date" "is equal to" "January 28, 2003" AND "Disputed Status" "is equal to" "Yes"
4. Show me the records where "Source" "is blank"
5. Show me the records where "Linked Issues" "is not blank"

Intermediate

More Acrobat



Almost everyone who uses the Internet uses Acrobat Reader. One of the major reasons for putting information into PDF format is that it is not editable and yet easy to view.

There are a lot of advantages to buying the full version of Adobe Acrobat. See <<http://www.adobe.com/store/main.jhtml>> for pricing information. Acrobat can be used to craft a searchable litigation repository for document-intensive litigation.

...you can use Acrobat's "catalog" function to create a searchable catalog of PDF files and generate indexes for directories. You can organize PDF files by case matter and relevant subdirectories. Once the index is created, you can search for text across the entire repository and use the enhanced search options to do even more.³

Acrobat tutorials are available from Adobe at:

INTERMEDIATE

More Acrobat (Continued)



<<http://www.adobe.com/products/tips/acrobat.html>> and
<<http://www.adobe.com/epaper/tips/acrannotate/page7.html>>.

But better than Adobe itself, the Northern Trails Area Education Agency has a more comprehensive tutorial with downloadable materials for activities with which to practice at: <<http://www.aea2.k12.ia.us/tutorials/acrobat/acrobat.html>>.

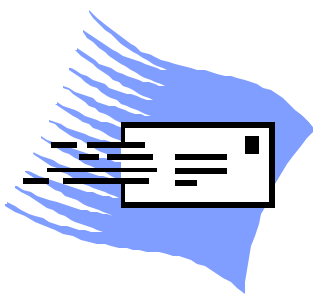
Designer Info concentrates their tutorial at: <<http://www.designer-info.com/master.htm>>

<http://www.designer-info.com/Writing/acrobat_tutorial.htm> on the Distiller element of Acrobat, which creates PDF files from other types of files, such as Word.

The J. Reuben Clark Law School offers a good tutorial in (PDF format!) at: <http://www.law2.byu.edu/HelpDesk/software_instruction/miscellaneous/adobe_acrobat/adobe_acrobat_tutorial.pdf>

ADVANCED

E-mail: Friend or Foe



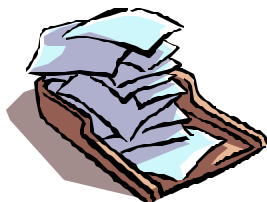
Friend: A recent survey by the Meta Group of nearly 400 world-wide corporate executives and IT leaders showed that 80% see e-mail more valuable than the telephone as a method of communication. The top three reasons for their preference were “response flexibility, easy communication with multiple people at once and the default creation of a paper trail.”⁴

Foe: How ironic that the respondents liked the “paper trail” aspect of e-mail, when it has caused so many embarrassing and expensive results whenever e-mail communications are hauled into court! From Fortune Magazine’s website: “It was supposed to make

life easier. Now e-mail has become a prosecutor’s No. 1 weapon and the surest way for companies to get sued. How e-mail became e-evidence mail--and why the solution is often worse than the problem.”

“For prosecutors, it has become the star witness--or perhaps an even better weapon than that. Think of e-mail as the corporate equivalent of DNA evidence, that single hair left at the crime scene that turns the entire case. In theory you can explain it away, but good luck trying.”⁵

What are the dangers of e-mail for lawyers? For one thing, if an e-mail pertains to a client’s case it belongs to him/her! The unintentional deletion of an important e-mail “could be



INTERMEDIATE

E-mail: Friend or Foe (Continued)

interpreted as a betrayal of our responsibility to protect our client's property."⁶

How does your inbox look?
Which "reply" was the final copy?
Which "Forward" includes all relevant comments? Are you sure

you have not hit "Reply All", "Reply with History" or just plain sent to the wrong person? More than anything else, lawyers use e-mail to distribute documents. It is vital to check each attachment before hitting the "Send" button!

FOOTNOTES

¹ "Databasics V: Getting information out." [g]eekgirl.[t]alks: [p]lain-[l]anguage [c]omputing. © 2001. Rose Vines. 26 May 2003. <http://www.geekgirls.com/databasics_05.htm>

² "Query by Example." Internet.com (Webopedia). 2003 Jupitermedia Corporation. 26 May 2003. <http://www.webopedia.com/TERM/q/query_by_example.html>

³ "Use Adobe Acrobat to Boost Productivity." Law.com. 29 May 2003. ALM Properties, Inc. 4 June 2003. <<http://www.law.com/servlet/ContentServer?pagename=OpenMarket/Xcelerate/View&c=LawArticle&cid=1052440784854&t=LawArticle>>

⁴ Weiss, Todd R. "Don't Call, Send E-Mail Instead." PCWORLD.COM. 24 April 2003. Computerworld, Inc. 5 June 2003. <<http://www.pcworld.com/news/article/0,aid,110409,00.asp>>

⁵ Varchaver, Nicholas. "TECHNOLOGY: The Perils of E-Mail." Fortune. 3 Feb 2003. Time Inc. 5 June 2003. <<http://www.fortune.com/fortune/technology/articles/0,15114,418678,00.html>>

⁶ Lipman, Keith. "Owning e-Mail." Modern Practice. May 2003. ALM Properties. 5 June 2003. <http://practice.findlaw.com/scripts/prINTER_friendly.pl?page=/productreview-0503.html>

